



## Start of Claire Sheftel Collection

**AR 11705**

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AR 11705

VI

Claire Smetzel Sampson 2002

**Claire Sheftel family Collection (AHC 2843)**

(if not indicated otherwise , all items below are copies)

1 AHC QII

2 A copy of Claire Hecht's ( CS's former nname) passport from the 'Deutsches Reich', issued on 2/8/1939 in Vienna, Austria ( two sheets)

3 A copy of a ' Militaerische Widmungskarte' to Heinrich Hecht ( CS's father) issued by the 'Ergaenzungskommando Wien' on 07/20/1938

THE AUSTRIAN HERITAGE COLLECTION AT THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE  
AUSTRIAN-JEWISH IMMIGRANTS IN THE USA

LEO BAECK INSTITUTE: 15 WEST 16<sup>TH</sup> STREET, 4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10011, TEL (212) 744 - 6400

*We kindly ask you to answer the following questions in as much detail as possible, either in English or in German. If you need more space, please feel free to use additional sheets. If you don't know the answer to certain questions or don't want to answer for any reason, just go on to the next question.*

NAME: Claire Sheftel DATE: 7/15/03

1. BEFORE MARCH 1938

1.1 Please describe your parental home.

(Did you live in an apartment or in a house? How many people lived there with you? Did you have servants? What language(s) were spoken in the household?)

*We lived in an apartment, my parents, brother and I. We had a maid. My parents spoke polish, yiddish and german. We learned english after emigrating to Shanghai.*

1.2 Please tell us about your neighborhood (District in Vienna or area).

(What ethnic groups lived there? Religious life? Relationships between Jews and non-Jews? Relationships with neighbors?)

*We lived in the 7. district of Vienna. Mixed neighborhood. Friends and relatives in walking distance. Our next door neighbor, was an anti semite, told us we are different. He was a dentist.*

**1.3 What religious tradition existed in your family?**

(Did you keep kosher, go to synagogue, observe holidays, etc.?)

*go to synagogues, observe Jewish holidays*

**1.4 Please, tell us about your friends and acquaintances ?**

(Were they mostly Jewish or non-Jewish? Did you have any close non-Jewish friends?)

*They were all Jewish, no non Jewish friends*

**1.5 Were you affiliated with any political, social or religious organization?**

(Youth Organizations, Zionist Organizations, Political Parties, other organizations)

If so, did you have any specific function?

*no*

**1.6 Did you or your family encounter any anti-Semitism in Austria before March 1938?**

(If so, please give details.)

yes, in Realgymnasium and Dressmaking school. The teachers were very anti-semitic before Hitler. You could not get good grades from the trip to Shanghai, I sent one of the teachers a letter, what I thought about her. The Professors in Realgymnasium made remarks about Jews.

**1.7 What was your/ your family's reaction to Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933 and to Nazi activity in Austria in the early thirties? Did you/ they feel threatened by these events?**

We were worried, but my father made a good living and at first thought we might stay. But then when we could not go to school anymore, because we were Jewish, he saw no future in Vienna and looked for an escape.

2. FROM MARCH 1938 TO EMIGRATION - FROM EUROPE TO AMERICA

2.1 How was your time spent during and after the "Anschluss"?

What was the impact of the "Anschluss" on you personally?

(Were you expelled from school/university? Did you or somebody in your family lose your/ their jobs? Were your apartments/houses looted? Were you (or members of your family) persecuted? Were you/ they forced to scrub the streets?)

*I was expelled from school. The principal stood at the entrance and said no jews come in this school anymore. I started working at a tailor and he let me go and said if the Nazis find out you work here, I don't know what they are going to do to me. They tried looting our apartment, did not find anything.*

2.2 How did non-Jewish friends, colleagues, schoolmates, neighbors, etc. behave toward you and your family?

*a few felt sorry for us.*

- 2.3 Could you please describe your recollections of November 9th, 1938, the so-called „Reichs-Kristallnacht“ (in case you still were in Austria at that time)

My parents gave me our jewels on 11/9/38. I walked around the block, while the Nazis plundered our apartment.

- 2.4 Were you or any members of your family arrested? Sent to a camp? (If so, please give details.)

no, we left before that started

- 2.5 Can you recall the process of obtaining papers necessary for emigration? (Did you try to obtain visas for other countries as well? Were you supported by any relief organization, by relatives or friends?)

My father tried every country you can think of, there was no visa obtainable for any where. My father's step brother had gone to Shanghai in Jan. 1939, he sent us a cable come, you need no visa. We left everything and my dad got us 4 tickets on an Italian ship from Genoa to Shanghai; so we left by train for Genoa on Feb. 23 1939



- 2.6 What happened to your (or your family's) apartments, houses, businesses and other property?

they took over

- 2.7 When did you leave Austria? (Please indicate exact date, if possible)

February 23 1939

- 2.8 If you did not emigrate directly to the U.S, where did you go first?  
(How long did you stay there? Can you give a brief description of your experiences?  
Was there an immediate reason - apart from the general threat - for your emigration?)

We went to Shanghai, China. Lived there for exactly 8 years. Since there were no visa requirements, being able to emigrate to Shanghai saved our lives. We surely would have been killed in the concentration camps had we not left for Shanghai. My father was very wise and he saw the danger.

**3. THE UNITED STATES**

**3.1 When did you arrive in the U.S.? (Please indicate exact date, if possible)**

*April 7, 1947 San Francisco from Shanghai*

**3.2 Did members of your family emigrate to countries other than the U.S.?**

(If so, where? Where do they live today? Are you still in contact with them?)

*My parents had polish quota, could not enter the U.S. went from Shanghai to Montreal, Canada in 1948, getting out with one of the last planes before the communists took over. My brother got to Winnipeg, Canada. They are all gone. My brother now still lives in Winnipeg. My parents came to Los Angeles to be with me in 1949*

**3.3 Did you serve in the U.S. Armed Forces or in any other allied army?**

(If so, when did you join? What division? What was your area of operation? When were you discharged?)

*no*

**3.4 Please list places and dates of residence in the U.S.**

(City, State; in bigger cities, neighborhood)

West Los Angeles 1947 - 1952  
moved to Culver City, (bordering Los Angeles) in 1952  
and still live there.

**3.5 Please describe your occupational situation after your arrival in the U.S.**

worked for Saks Fifth Avenue and as a Forelady  
in garment factory.

**3.6 Did you belong to any emigrant/immigrant-related organization or cultural association? (e.g. Austrian American Federation, Austrian Forum, etc.? If so, since when?)**

no

- 3.7 Do you still speak German in the USA? If so, with whom and when? How often?

*I still know how to speak german, but prefer not to do it and have nobody to use the language, did not want my children to learn it.*

- 3.8 Would you call yourself religious? To what degree? What is your affiliation? Did it change?  
(Do you keep kosher, go to synagogue, observe the holidays,...?)

*I am religious, but not kosher. I am a member of a reformed synagogue.*

- 3.9 Were your friends and acquaintances mostly German-speaking or non-German-speaking? Mainly Jewish or not?

*My friends are all jews, many from Shanghai, but nobody speaks german anymore.*

- 3.10 Of what country (countries) are you a citizen? When was each citizenship granted?

*U.S.A Was granted in 1952*

**3.11 Have you ever visited Austria after the war? If so, how often?**

(What did you do there? Can you recall some of your impressions during these visits?

Have you ever thought of going back permanently?)

3 times. The last time I went in 2001 with my granddaughters, invited by the government and Jewish organization, we shook hands with the President (Kerner) they wine and dined us, was very enjoyable. Love to visit, but could not live there. Not enough Jewish people.

**4. PARTICIPATION IN OTHER ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS**

**4.1 Have you ever been interviewed by any other organization?**

(If yes, please indicate when and by which organization?)

*no*

**4.2 Have you ever been mentioned in any historical works?**

(Holocaust-related literature, Documentary films, Exhibitions etc.)

*no*

## 5. FAMILY MEMBERS

- 5.1 **Spouse** (Name, Maiden Name, Place/date of birth [if deceased, place/date of death], Occupation[s])

Herbert Schefftel (changed to Sheftel) born 11/10/16  
in Berlin, Germany, passed away 1/7/97  
~~Automotive~~ Bus. owner in Los Angeles

- 5.2 **Mother** (Name, Maiden Name, Place/date of birth [if deceased, place/date of death], Occupation[s])

Yadwiga Marek, Czermonita 1/13/1895  
housewife passed away 2/18/58  
in Los Angeles

- 5.3 **Father** (Name, Place/date of birth [if deceased, place/date of death], Occupation[s])

Heinrich Flecht, Polomea, Poland 8/18/1896  
Men's clothing business, passed away in 6/4/82  
Los Angeles

- 5.4 **Siblings** (Name, Maiden Name, Place/date of birth [if deceased, place/date of death], Occupation[s])

Egon Flecht Vienna, Austria 10/23/24  
passed away in Winnipeg, Canada in 1978

**5.5 Children** (Name, Maiden Name, Address [City, State, Country], Place/date of birth [if deceased, place/date of death], Occupation[s])

Larry Sheftel Los Angeles, Calif. Born in L.A. Oct. 12/1933  
Steve " Culver City, Calif. Born in L.A. Oct 21/1933  
James " Los Angeles, Calif. Born in L.A. 3/17/1935

**5.6 Grandparents** (Name, Maiden Name, Place/date of birth, place/date of death, Occupation[s])

Yasiek & Fanny Sheft, Kolomea, Poland

*The Austrian Heritage Collection is always looking for people to interview.*

*If you know any Austrian-Jewish immigrants in the US who might be interested in participating in this project, please either ask them to contact us or write their addresses below.*

*Thank you very much for participating in this project.*



DEUTSCHES REICH

877039



(Gott-Symbol)

3

REISEPASS

Nr. 90990

NAMEN DES PASSINHABERS

Sara  
Claire Nocht

BEGLEITET VON SEINER EHEFRAU

UND VON KINDERN

STAATSANGEHÖRIGKEIT

DEUTSCHES REICH





Ehefrau

Lichtbild

Unterschrift des Paßinhabers

*Claire Hecht*

und seiner Ehefrau

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß der Inhaber die durch das obige Lichtbild dargestellte Person ist und die Krüner beifolgende Unterschrift eigenhändig voll-



Wien

8. FEB. 1939

*J. A. Wagner*

PERSONENBESCHREIBUNG

Ehefrau

Beruf

*Private* 0322

Geburtsort

*Wien*

Geburstag

*3. I. 1922*

Wohnort

*Wien*

Gestalt

*mittel*

Gesicht

*oval*

Farbe der Augen

*blau*

Farbe des Haares

*braun*

Besond. Kennzeichen

*/*

KINDER

Name

Alter

Geschlecht

Raum für amtliche Eintragungen  
(Dienstleistungen und Standeskontrolle)

20. Juni 1938

Ergänzungskommando

13. Juni



# Militärische Widmungskarte

Heinrich HEG HT

für

wohnt in		Wien, 7. Westbahnstrasse 31
Geburts-	Jahr, Monat, Tag	1896
	Ortsgemeinde	
	Bezirk	
	Land	
Stellungs-	Jahr	
	Befund*	Tauglich mit ohne Waffe
	Protokollzahl	
Überlegt in die Ersatzreserve		
Militär. Dienstgrad, Titel (Wartegelb, Ruhestand, Eidensg. usw.)		
Beruf, besond. Verwendung		KW

Diese Widmungskarte ist schonend zu behandeln und geschützt zu verwahren. Einsicht darf nur gemäß der Befehrsung auf Seite 3 gewährt werden. Die Verwendung hat unter doppeltem Umschlag zu erfolgen.

\* Nichtzutreffendes ist zu streichen.

Mil. Lager-Nr. 277. Militärische Widmungskarte. (M. 61.494-W/37.) — Streng verteidbar. — Österreichische Staatsdruckerei. (G.) 3600 37



**End of Claire Sheftel Collection**

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